

with implementing the President's policies as well as being an independent investigator and, in some cases, a prosecutor. She described the importance of acting free from political or partisan influence as her "North Star."

While Ms. Monaco and I will surely have policy disagreements at some point, I trust her ability to fairly and impartially administer justice while operating free of personal bias or political agenda. I believe she is well qualified to serve as the Deputy Attorney General, and I plan to support her nomination.

Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the second nominee who appeared before the Judiciary Committee yesterday. Vanita Gupta has been nominated to serve as the Associate Attorney General, which is sometimes considered to be the No. 3 position at the Department of Justice. Throughout her career, Ms. Gupta has been a clear and outspoken advocate for some pretty radical policies.

In 2012, for example, she wrote that States should decriminalize the possession of all drugs—not just marijuana but all drugs—which, I presume, would include things like fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and other highly addictive and destructive drugs. In yesterday's hearing, when I asked Ms. Gupta about this statement, she took the opposite position. She didn't tell me "I used to advocate for that position and have now changed my position." She said, unequivocally, that she did not advocate for the decriminalization of all drugs. It became apparent she wanted Senators to forget what she previously wrote:

States should decriminalize simple possession of all drugs, particularly marijuana, and for small amounts of other drugs.

That is a quote from an article she wrote in 2012. Unfortunately, the list of inconsistencies does not end there.

In June of 2020, less than a year ago, Ms. Gupta argued that it ought to be easier to sue police officers in court for money damages. Now, this is sometimes called "qualified immunity," which recognizes the fact that law enforcement officers have to make split-second decisions—life-or-death decisions, actually—and that it would be unfair to them to, in retrospect, go back and flyspeck all of their decisions. In other words, it gives them some room in which to operate, recognizing the unique nature of their job. It applies to other government employees, too. Yet, in June 2020, less than a year ago, she argued that it was time to revisit this doctrine of qualified immunity—in other words, to make it easier to sue police officers for money.

This was one of the many steps that she outlined in an opinion piece in a national publication following the death of George Floyd. Nine months later, she says she does not support that position—one she supported 9 months ago. Now she says she does not support the position of making it easier to sue police officers.

And there is more.

Last summer, Ms. Gupta put her support behind the "defund the police" movement. As our country engaged in an important and long overdue debate about the police's use of force and responsible policing strategies, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on that very topic.

Ms. Gupta testified before the committee and said:

While front-end systems changes are important, it is also critical for state and local leaders to heed calls from Black Lives Matter and Movement for Black Lives activists to decrease police budgets and the scope, role, and responsibility of police in our lives.

Yesterday, Ms. Gupta did not mince words. She said she does not support defunding the police, and she said decreasing police budgets was not defunding the police. Well, at the time we were discussing this movement for defunding police, she attempted to parse her words. It is tough to reconcile the stark difference between what Ms. Gupta has said in the past and what she now says as she attempts to win support in the Senate. I am wary and, frankly, skeptical of confirmation conversions wherein people take the opposite positions when they are nominated for important, Senate-confirmed positions from the positions they have taken in the past.

I understand her interest in distancing herself from her previous positions. Decriminalizing drugs, eliminating qualified immunity—making it easier to second-guess and sue police officers for money damages—and defunding the police are radical policy positions that should disqualify someone from becoming the third-highest ranking official at the Justice Department. In order to be confirmed, Ms. Gupta knows she needs to convince us that she actually holds mainstream views on law enforcement strategies and issues. I find it hard to believe that these views, which are not from decades-old law school writings but are recent public statements—indeed, sworn testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee—are views she no longer holds, which she said she held so recently.

I want to be clear on one point.

The opinions of Ms. Gupta's as a private citizen are not an issue. She has every right to hold opinions that differ from mine or anybody else's, but when you are the nominee for a high level—indeed, one of the highest levels—of critical law enforcement positions, these are highly problematic and, to my mind, disqualifying.

Perhaps more so than any other Federal Department or Agency, the Department of Justice must operate free from bias and political agendas. The men and women leading the Department must be able to separate their personal beliefs from the jobs before them. No matter how they feel about the wisdom of the policies enacted by Congress, their jobs are to enforce the law not as they want it to be but as it

is. People across the country should have confidence that the senior leaders at the Justice Department will follow the law as written—without fail. We can't have leaders who turn a blind eye to whatever is politically convenient when it conflicts with their personally held positions.

Based on Ms. Gupta's clear history of radical policy positions, which stands in stark contrast to the laws she would be charged with enforcing, I do not believe she can separate her convictions from the job at hand. Leaders within the Department must be able to view all matters as matters of fact and as matters of duty, not just as matters of opinion or as platforms to argue for changes in the law.

As the Senate has considered the President's nominees over the past several weeks, I have been very clear that I will not oppose nominees based simply on the President's political party. I think the President is entitled to some deference as to the people he chooses. That was the strategy of our Democratic colleagues previously, and it is incredibly damaging to both our country and its institutions. Just because a President you don't like has nominated somebody does not justify opposing that President's nominee. I will continue to evaluate all nominees of this President based on their merits and their abilities to do the jobs for which they were nominated.

I firmly believe that the American people deserve to have qualified, fair-minded individuals leading these important Departments and Agencies. For the Department of Justice, which is responsible for enforcing the law of the land and imparting fair and equal justice, that is doubly true. There is simply no room for political or partisan or ideological agendas at the Department of Justice. I am concerned that Ms. Gupta will continue to pursue those objectives from within the Department and use all of the Department's tools and the authority given to her to achieve these ideological outcomes. Therefore, I cannot support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

#### FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, recently, the Biden administration withdrew a proposed Trump administration rule that would have required universities and K-12 schools to identify their connections with Confucius Institutes, which are very much connected to the country of China and, I would even say, to the Communist Party of China, which may be one and the same. I have asked the Biden administration about that move, but the administration has failed to respond to date. So I am here today to discuss four areas wherein the administration must be tough with China as well as with other countries.

Since April 2015, I have conducted oversight on several key aspects of foreign efforts to influence Members of

Congress and the American public. First, I have focused on the equal, fair, and aggressive enforcement of transparency laws. An example of one transparency law that I will focus on is the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

I first raised concerns about the Foreign Agents Registration Act in April 2015, when it became very apparent that it wasn't being used hardly at all. Historically, it hasn't been used very much, and people have been getting away without registering under that act. It may be OK to represent a foreign country or a foreign interest, but at least we in Congress ought to know about it, and, in turn, the American people ought to know who you are and whom you are speaking for.

In 1938, Congress passed that law for the purpose then of exposing Nazi propaganda and identifying foreign attempts to influence policymakers as well as the American public. Last updated in 1966, the Foreign Agents Registration Act requires those who lobby on behalf of foreign governments and foreign interests to register their affiliations and activities with our Justice Department.

The Foreign Agents Registration Act reflects the fundamental principle that transparency brings accountability. Until recently, however, the law has been seldom used. The Foreign Agents Registration Act ought to be better enforced and also be equally enforced. That is why I worked to expose holes in the existing law and then find ways through additional legislation to shore it up or even use oversight to see that the Justice Department takes its use with more certainty and with more force.

As a result of those efforts, last session, I introduced a bipartisan bill that goes by the title of "Foreign Agents Disclosure and Registration Enhancement Act." Since it wasn't passed in the last Congress, I will be reintroducing it this session. The bill requires the Justice Department for the first time to craft a comprehensive enforcement strategy and to release advisory opinions to promote that transparency. It gives investigators new tools, including civil investigative demand authority, to help identify violations.

Last Congress, the bill had support from Chairman GRAHAM and Ranking Member FEINSTEIN of the Judiciary Committee and Chairman RUBIO and Vice Chairman WARNER of the Intelligence Committee. It also had bipartisan support on the Foreign Relations Committee, including from Senators SHAHEEN, RUBIO, MURPHY, and YOUNG, who have all worked to shine a light on foreign influence. We also had the signoff from the chairman of that committee, also with support from the Trump administration.

Unfortunately, when Senator CORNYN and I joined on the floor just before Christmas to ask for unanimous consent for the passage of this bill that had such broad bipartisan support, the Democrats objected even though it had

this bipartisan, multicommittee support.

So I strongly urge the Biden administration to join my efforts in making commonsense, bipartisan reforms to the Foreign Agents Registration Act and to make it a priority. My bill gets the job done.

The second point I want to raise is that I have focused my oversight on increasing nontraditional espionage activities and foreign threats targeting taxpayer-funded research.

When I was chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 2018, I convened a hearing regarding Chinese nontraditional espionage against the United States. In that hearing, both DOJ and FBI officials made very clear that the threat to our universities and taxpayer-funded research from foreign governments, especially China, is real and it is ongoing. For example, the Department of Justice witness stated:

We need to adapt our enforcement strategy to reach non-traditional collectors, including researchers in labs, universities, and the defense industrial base, some of whom may have undisclosed ties to Chinese institutions and conflicting loyalties.

The FBI witness stated that China's talent recruitment programs are effectively "brain gain programs" that "encourage theft of intellectual property from U.S. institutions."

In June of 2019, when I was chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I held a hearing on foreign threats to taxpayer-funded research which focused heavily on China's theft and China's espionage within our research community here in the United States.

After the hearing, I organized a classified committee briefing on the topic from the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Health and Human Services inspector general, and the Department of Homeland Security.

The Trump administration ramped up government efforts to investigate and prosecute researchers for stealing intellectual property and research. The Biden administration must continue those aggressive efforts if they want to be taken seriously. Those efforts are more important now than ever. For example, during the COVID pandemic, China has used cyber attacks to try to steal COVID-related research.

Third, another focus of mine has been on propaganda efforts within our schools and universities. Specifically, that concerns China's Confucius Institutes. As an extension of the Chinese Government, the Confucius Institutes are a foreign principal for purposes of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. According to reporting, the strategic goal of the Chinese Government is to place its institutes within existing colleges and universities in order to influence perceptions of the Communist government in China under the guise of teaching Chinese language, Chinese culture, and Chinese history. In other words, we have to see this problem with open eyes.

In light of these factors, in October of 2018, I wrote to the Justice Department and asked why it had yet to require individuals working for Confucius Institutes to register as foreign agents under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Then, in March of 2020, I wrote to dozens of schools asking that they get a briefing from the FBI on the threats Confucius Institutes bring to the academic environment.

I have also strongly backed Senator KENNEDY's Confucius Act—that is the title of the bill—which passed the Senate just last week. In part, that bill mandates that if a school wants an institute on campus, that school must have full managerial and academic control, not control from the Chinese Government.

China's threats to our security are very real. They are known and show no sign of stopping. It is a very good sign that in the past couple of years, many universities and colleges have cut ties with Confucius Institutes. Probably some of those were on those respective campuses for a long period of time.

The Biden administration must use every tool at its disposal to protect and defend our national security from this Communist threat, which is why I wrote to the Biden Department of Homeland Security on February 11 this year regarding its withdrawal of the Confucius rule, which I thought was a very good step forward from the previous administration.

Among the questions I asked of the Department, two relate to whether the Biden administration considers the Confucius Institute to be an extension of the Communist Chinese Government as well as being purveyors of Communist Chinese propaganda. That ought to be easily recognized, and I imagine our President does recognize it, but I want to have him tell me so. So far, that Department has thus far failed to respond.

The Biden administration would be wise to answer both in the affirmative to clearly state to the country and the world where it stands regarding China's gigantic propaganda machine, of which the Confucius Institutes are only a small part. In other words, besides going after the Confucius Institutes, we have to have our eyes open to every way that the Communist Chinese and their government is trying to influence things in this country, as well as stealing things from our country.

Lastly, I want to highlight a very important issue that has recently been brought to my attention. Upon entering office, President Biden fired all U.S. Executive Directors at multilateral development banks who were currently serving out their terms. Some of these multilateral development banks are the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

It has been U.S. tradition for incoming Presidents to allow these nonpartisan U.S. Executive Directors to

serve in their positions until their term ends regardless of whatever administration put them in those positions. This tradition is meant to ensure that the United States maintains a consistent authoritative presence and engagement within those multilateral institutions.

In the last administration, the United States was tough on China through these development banks, and we were hoping that these people would be left in place so they could continue that tough-on-China approach. The Executive Directors who were in their respective positions made it a point to defend U.S. strategic interests by building coalitions aimed at eroding Chinese influence, which has been allowed to grow at an alarming extent. There is quite a push by the Chinese Communist Government to get involved in the highest levels of almost every international organization, not just these banks that I am talking about.

Removing these U.S. leaders from their positions prior to their terms expiring and with no replacements even nominated isn't an example of the United States leading; this is an example of our country ceding its duties and responsibilities on the world stage.

In addition to my unanswered letters, the Biden administration should inform Congress as to why it removed all Executive Directors from their positions prior to their terms expiring.

I hope President Biden knows China is aggressively growing its influence in these multilateral organizations, so now isn't the time to abandon the field. There is no time to be weak with China. We must work tirelessly to protect our way of life and our national security from the ever-present threat of the Communist Chinese Government. At the same time, we must build on the foundation that the Trump administration created to protect American taxpayers from foreign theft and espionage and propaganda.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF MICHAEL STANLEY REGAN

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to support the nomination of Michael S. Regan to be Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as we celebrate the Agency's 50th anniversary and the return of the United States to the Paris Agreement, which the agency will play a key role in meeting.

Reducing carbon pollution and other forms of air and water pollution has generated enormous environmental, health, and economic benefits over the last 50 years.

While the Trump administration claimed that rolling back clean air protections frees up economic activity, in fact, reducing climate emissions is critical to a thriving, sustainable economy. Fortunately, many States maintained a strong commitment to protecting air quality and addressing climate change. Maryland, under Republican and Democratic Governors, has benefitted from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative with 10 other States. However, the EPA is indispensable: Air pollution crosses State borders and requires strong and fair Federal regulation.

I am energized by Mr. Regan's commitment to furthering progress on environmental justice. Research shows that air pollution and climate change disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color. Maryland suffers disproportionately from upwind pollution from fossil-fuel fired power plants out of State.

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia's recent rejection of the Trump administration's efforts to weaken carbon pollution limits for power plants clears the way for the EPA to set thoughtful standards that will effectively slash carbon emissions from the electricity sector and create clean energy-related jobs.

Now that President Biden has returned our Nation to the Paris Agreement, the EPA has a critical role to ensure America leads by example at home. After all, this is the Federal agency the Endangerment Finding obligates to take action under the Clean Air Act to curb emissions of carbon pollution from vehicles, power plants, and other industries.

Carbon neutrality is the policy tool that may drive economic recovery and innovation for the coming decades.

This goal to achieve a 100-percent clean energy economy and net-zero emissions no later than 2050 would align us with a pathway to limit global temperature rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius and help avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change. The EPA will play an increasingly important role in climate policy, which will be a key element of economic policy, domestically and internationally.

The EPA's climate responsibilities include the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons—HFCs—potent greenhouse gases used as coolants in refrigerators, air conditioners, and industrial applications that are the subject of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, a global agreement to protect the ozone layer. The bipartisan Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 provided authority to allow for the phase-down of HFCs and subsequent transition to the newer, better alternatives.

Rebuilding scientific expertise is fundamental to the ability of the EPA to carry out this and other climate responsibilities. The Union of Concerned Scientists recently reported that the EPA lost more than 1,000 scientists be-

tween its highest reported number of scientists in early 2017 and its lowest reported number of scientists at the end of 2019. On average, the Agency lost over 200 scientists per year between 2016 and 2020. I am relieved North Carolina Governor Cooper commended Mr. Regan for restoring morale among career staff at the Department of Environmental Quality and emphasizing a respect for science. He will need to do the same at EPA.

The Environmental Protection Agency should be the last workplace to have vacancies during a climate crisis that is undeniable. In 2018 alone, there were 14 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in the United States, with a total cost of \$91 billion. These costs will likely rise due to climate change.

Carbon dioxide released into waterways as a result of water pollution by nutrients is enhancing unwanted changes in ocean acidity due to atmospheric increases in carbon dioxide. The changes may already be affecting commercial fish and shellfish populations, according to data and model predictions published in the American Chemical Society's journal, *Environmental Science & Technology*. A new study by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center also shows that oysters stressed by low dissolved oxygen and warm water—the result of extreme weather events—early in life grow thicker shells and less meat, which threatens a way of life for Maryland oyster fishers and growers.

The EPA also leads the Federal agency partners in engaging the Chesapeake Bay Program, a grassroots effort with bipartisan support to preserve and restore the largest estuary in the country. Executive Order 13508 declaring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed a national treasure established a goal of restoring oyster populations in 20 tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay by 2025.

Over the past 4 years, the Trump administration sought to undermine the Chesapeake Bay Program and roll back Clean Water Act protections critical to the restoration effort, proposing to eliminate the EPA program's budget in total dereliction of its duties as a key Federal partner. Despite these setbacks, the Chesapeake Bay Program partners have made steady progress toward achieving the nutrient reduction goals set out in 2010 in the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint to have 100 percent of measures in place by 2025 to achieve fishable, swimmable water quality standards.

This is significantly more likely once the EPA returns to proper levels of staffing and funding. As Administrator, I am confident Mr. Regan will respect science and the duties of the Agency to lead the Chesapeake Bay Program through this substantial milestone.

The EPA is the lynchpin in the Chesapeake Bay Program. Maryland farmers have successfully stepped up to the plate to achieve nutrient reduction goals. Their efforts will be diminished,

however, if the EPA does not act as arbiter to hold States accountable for pollution upstream. Therefore, I was particularly pleased to see that the agricultural community widely supports Mr. Regan's nomination.

Both the global effort to combat climate change and the regional Chesapeake Bay restoration effort are enormously challenging. Yet the prospect of confirming Michael Regan to be the Administrator of an EPA that produces policy based on Scientific evidence and robust community input has me hopeful that we can sustain a healthy, vibrant watershed and Nation for generations to come.

#### VOTE ON REGAN NOMINATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was set for 5:23 begins right now.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Will the Senate advise and consent to the Regan nomination?

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Ex.]

#### YEAS—66

Baldwin	Hassan	Portman
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Romney
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Brown	Kaine	Rubio
Burr	Kelly	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Lee	Sinema
Collins	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Manchin	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tester
Cramer	Menendez	Tillis
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Warnock
Fischer	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wicker
Grassley	Peters	Wyden

#### NAYS—34

Barrasso	Hagerty	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Sasse
Blunt	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Boozman	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Capito	Johnson	Shelby
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Young
Daines	Moran	
Ernst	Paul	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Regan nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me explain to the public and the

Senators what we are doing here. In the bipartisan agreement we faced under a 50–50 Senate, the rules say that if there were a tie vote, the majority leader has the ability to discharge the nomination from committee and then there be a vote on the floor.

In this case, the nomination of Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, there was a tie vote in the Finance Committee. And what I will be doing in a moment is invoking that rule so that there can be 4 hours of debate on the motion, equally divided, and we will debate whether Becerra should be approved. Obviously, he only needs approval with 50 or 51 votes if the Vice President comes to break the tie.

I will say a brief word here. It is confounding to me that Mr. Becerra, Xavier Becerra, did not get some votes from the other side of the aisle. He is an eminently qualified member. He was an outstanding Member of Congress. He was a very good Attorney General, and he has led the charge to keep people's healthcare. When he was Attorney General, he was involved in the lawsuits of those who wanted to repeal the ACA. And if that is the reason our Republican colleagues are objecting—because he wants to keep and preserve the Affordable Care Act, which is very popular with the American people and very needed—I am surprised. It is yesterday's news.

I know in 2010 a lot of people came here, "Repeal ACA," but as the public got to know the ACA, they saw how good it was. And there is not much groundswell out there, except among some, the hard right, to repeal it. So I am surprised. And then we heard: Well, he is not a doctor. I would remind my colleagues that the last nominee for HHS they supported was a drug company executive. Are our Republican friends saying they would rather have a drug company executive who was not a doctor either than somebody who has been a very careful, smart attorney who has been fighting for people to get better healthcare? I am surprised.

So I hope that we may get a few of our colleagues to join us tomorrow and vote for Mr. Becerra. I don't think it will serve the country well or the Republicans well to be so adamantly opposed to him. But let me now proceed.

#### MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, pursuant to S. Res. 27, the Committee on Finance, being tied on the question of reporting, I move to discharge the Senate Finance Committee from further consideration of the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of S. Res. 27, there will now be up to 4 hours of debate on the motion, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with no motions, points of order, or amendments in order.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we expect a vote on the motion to discharge to occur at approximately 12 noon on Thursday, March 11, 2021.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO BRAD RICHARDSON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it was one decade ago that my friend Brad Richardson saw an opportunity in Hardin County. The community was ready to step on the gas pedal and start a new era of growth. It had the raw materials: a dynamic workforce, a premium location, and a strong ally in Fort Knox. All it needed was the right person to lead the way. Today, I would like to pay tribute to Brad, a visionary leader who helped realize the area's potential. At the end of this month, he will begin a well-deserved retirement with our sincere thanks.

The first step was bringing everyone together. Brad is a natural team builder. He oversaw the consolidation of four local business advocacy groups into the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce. The new organization would help attract investment to one of Kentucky's most populous counties. As the chamber's inaugural president, Brad spent the next decade doing just that.

One of Brad's first moves at the new Hardin Chamber was to restart the annual Small Business Expo. The event gives local entrepreneurs the opportunities to connect with customers and local leaders as they expand their operations. Brad also launched a Buy Local campaign to keep Hardin County's dollars in the community. In 2014, he was named the Chamber Executive of the Year by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Hardin County is more than a great place to live and work. It is also the proud home to Fort Knox, one of Kentucky's premier military installations and the location of the U.S. bullion depository. The installation supports over 20,000 local jobs and makes a multibillion dollar annual economic impact. In 2016, Brad was a driving force in the establishment of the Knox Regional Development Alliance. The group is tasked with promoting the relationship between the community and our Armed Forces. For his work to encourage the partnership, Brad was given the Fort Knox Gold Neighbor Award.

I've worked closely with Brad and KRDA to invest in Fort Knox's infrastructure and capabilities. Last year,